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## THE CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLY ASSOCIATION.

WITHIN the last few years the progress of the Civil Service Supply Association in London has been so extraordinary that a few words concerning it may not be uninteresting to our readers.

The object of the society is 'to carry on the trade of general dealers, so as to secure to members of the Civil Service and the friends of members of the society the supply of articles of all kinds, both for domestic consumption and general use, at the lowest possible price,' on the principle of dealing for ready-money. Co-operation on the broadest scale of retail shop-keeping is brought into play. The organisation consists of three classes of purchasers: the holders of shares of the value of one pound each, and from whom the committee of management is chosen; ordinary members, who being connected with the Civil Service, pay two shillings and sixpence a year; and outsiders, or mere supporters of the concern (who, however, must be friends of members or shareholders), who pay the sum of five shillings annually. All have the same advantages in the purchase of goods, but members of the Civil Service have the privilege of having goods above a certain amount delivered carriage free. As the thing stands, the number of shareholders is limited to four thousand five hundred.

The constitution is a little complex, and to the non-initiated, perhaps not very rational; let it, however, be remembered that it is not so much a business concern, as what may aptly be termed a 'benefit society;' and if the objects of the society when it was started in 1866 have in late years been deviated from, it is more from the excessive growth of the institution than from any other cause. The Association has from less to more assumed truly gigantic proportions, and now takes rank as one of the wonders of the metropolis. The headquarters of the Association consist of huge and handsome premises in Queen Victoria Street, 'City,' the lease of which, subject to a ground-rent of one thousand four hundred pounds, has

been purchased, and which, together with certain additions to the building, has cost no less a sum than twenty-seven thousand pounds; but such is the increased value of property in this locality that they have recently been valued at thirty-two thousand pounds. On the ground-floor of this building, groceries of all kinds, wines, spirits, provisions, cigars, and tobacco are sold, forming three departments. On the first, all goods which come under the terms of hosiery, drapery, or clothing, besides umbrellas and sticks, are the articles of sale, forming two departments; and on the second floor, commerce is strongly represented by stationery, books, fancy goods, drugs, watches, and other miscellaneous goods, forming three departments. The third floor is appropriated for the offices of the clerks of the Association, who form a large staff, and for storage.

For the accommodation of West-end customers, an emporium in Long Acre was until recently used; but that becoming too small for an increasing trade, the Association has built commodious premises in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, costing twenty-five thousand pounds, whither the Long Acre business has been removed, and the arrangements of which are the same as at Queen Victoria Street. Not content with these, the Association has taken large premises at the back of Exeter Hall for storage purposes, as well as for the sale of various new articles and the carrying on of the tailoring department.

It is not a little astonishing to know that a society which originated in a very humble way indeed, has developed its business so much within little more than ten years that it requires more than six hundred *employés* for the furtherance of the concern. The secretary, who is the chief of this staff, has several clerks under him; and besides there are accountants, a treasurer, several store-keepers, clerks, assistants, cashiers, &c.—a body which costs the Association nearly fifty thousand pounds annually! The direction of the whole concern is vested in the hands of the committee, which numbers fifteen; and the shareholders

participate in the management so far as they are the constituents, so to speak, of the committeemen, the election taking place once a year, when five of the body go out in rotation. It may be added that there are likewise auditors, bankers, and other officials requisite to a society of this kind; and that the necessary managerial business is transacted at the ordinary meetings of the Association, twice a year.

The Civil Service Supply Association is said to take rank now amongst the largest buyers and sellers of this country, a circumstance we need not be surprised at when it is stated that the sales from the first year of the society's establishment to August 1877 amounted to upwards of six million pounds sterling; and the wonderfully rapid increase of the business may be judged by the fact that the sales of the Association, which in the first year (1867) amounted to L.21,322, in the year ending August 1877 reached the large sum of L.1,041,294. These figures are valuable in demonstrating the unprecedented success of this extraordinary Association, a success mainly due to the large body of members by which the Association is supported. Last year the number of clients was twenty-five thousand, including the four thousand five hundred shareholders already referred to. Last year each shareholder had the privilege of nominating two persons for membership, by which nine thousand outside members or subscribers will be added. We are further told that there is always a mass of applicants for admission to the Association, many of whom have been on the books of the society for years, unable to procure tickets.

Cheap goods being the main object of co-operative associations, we will now say a few words regarding the prices charged. At first the benefit in this respect was very appreciable; but as the society has increased, the benefit has, as a natural consequence of a corresponding increase in working expenses, to a certain extent decreased, and it may be added, is in many cases very variable. While on certain articles, such as fancy goods, drugs, perfumes, and the like, the reduction is considerable; on others again, such as tea, sugar, butter, and the like, which are of more common use, there is but a trifling difference between the Association's prices and those of the retail trade. This seems rather to defeat the true objects of co-operation, which are expected to convey benefit more in respect of articles of general consumption than of those much less necessary for common existence. The variableness of reduction arises probably from the fact that goods sold at little profit by shopkeepers are also not to be sold much cheaper at the stores; while the goods on which most gain is made at shops are those on which the Association can afford to make large reductions; but by a strange fatality, they are, as a rule, the very articles less required than any others by the members of the society.

In calculating prices the committee deem it necessary to act so as to be on the safe side in case of any error that might arise. On an average, the prices charged to members are at the rate of ten per cent. above the wholesale prices, thus allowing a profit to defray working expenses, which are about seven and a half per cent. This allowance has always proved a generous one, for

besides covering the annual expenditure, there has always been an important surplus.

For some years this surplus was allowed to accumulate, it being thought that it might probably prove useful as a reserve fund; but when it reached the large sum of nearly one hundred thousand pounds, it was plainly apparent that steps should be taken to dispose of it and all future surpluses. As concerned the foregoing sum, the rules of the society according to the act of parliament under which the Association is incorporated, rendered appropriation of it in any way impossible; it was therefore set apart as a reserve fund, invested in the buildings, stock, &c. of the Association; but a new set of rules was formed by which all profits accruing thereafter were to be divided amongst the shareholding body, and placed annually to the credit of each, to be, however, only withdrawable by their reliefs after death, or when the accumulations on any share shall amount to one hundred and seventy-five pounds, when, in order to comply with the provisions of the Provident Societies Act, which limits the funds any member may have in a society enrolled under its provisions to two hundred pounds, the excess must be withdrawn. This arrangement, which was duly legalised, and came into force in March 1874, naturally gave the shares a far greater value than they had hitherto possessed, as will be seen from the fact, that from the date mentioned to August last there has accrued very nearly one hundred thousand pounds. If the profits continue at this rate, the shares will of course increase in value each year, and already—since recent alterations in the rules have made them transferable and saleable—shares have been disposed of for sums varying from twenty to thirty pounds each; hardly a bad investment, comparatively speaking, for the sellers, to whom they cost but ten shillings, the rate of interest being eleven hundred per cent. per annum! This large profit is, however, considered by many to be a really objectionable feature, and at variance with the principles of the Association, namely, 'to supply articles at the lowest possible price.' We believe this view is entertained by the Committee of Management, who are about to take steps to have the high rate of interest reduced.

Seeing that a large annual profit accrues to the Association, and causes an embarrassment, the inquiry naturally arises—why not lower the prices of articles so as to leave no profit whatever? There are various reasons, as we understand, why prices cannot be lowered beyond an assigned limit. The profit on small quantities of articles is, as has already been stated, so infinitesimally meagre as to admit of no sensible reduction. And in many cases it is important not to make such reductions as would trench on the business of wholesale dealers; there being, indeed, an apprehension that customers might purchase articles not for their own use, but to sell at some advance to retailers and others. After all, the profits arise more from the average gain than from a charge on the respective articles.

It was to be anticipated that retail dealers would be bitterly antagonistic to the Civil Service Supply Association; and so steady and sturdy was their opposition, that in its first years the Association experienced considerable difficulty in persuading wholesale houses to deal with it. Indeed

large orders were the only inducement by which these houses could be got to supply the goods required, and even now we believe some firms hang back. The transactions of the Association have, however, operated upon members of the retail trade, who finding their business affected, have in self-defence been forced to reduce their prices to the general public. It thus becomes apparent that the Civil Service and other kindred co-operative associations have directly benefited the masses, by inducing a general lowering of the cost of many articles of daily necessity.

As an instance of the difficulties and jealousies which have from time to time beset this beneficent institution, the committee for a long time found it difficult to get and retain good tailors, who as a rule disappeared in a mysterious manner. These difficulties have, however, with patience and perseverance, been overcome, and the tailoring branch has become very successful.

It may here be mentioned that all goods purchased at the stores must be described in the form of an order, which has to be examined and checked, and payment always made to properly constituted cashiers (never over the counter), before the receipt of the goods. Large orders undergo a thorough and strict examination, to see that the goods are for the legitimate use of the applicant member or shareholder, with the view of defeating any improper interference from retail dealers.

In its present successful condition, to which the Civil Service Association has so rapidly attained—the clear assets amounting in August 1877 to one hundred and ninety thousand pounds, after all liabilities had been paid—there are few things which cannot be obtained at or through the medium of the stores. It were a futile task to attempt even an approximate estimate of the goods that may be bought in this manner; suffice it to say that each and all are duly chronicled in the Association's Price List. This list, which is issued once every quarter, is no bad criterion of the success of the institution. When it was first issued, the contents covered no more than a small single sheet; now, however, it is a thick book of nearly three hundred pages. It is not only a record of all goods sold at the stores, but also contains the names and addresses of the various firms which have entered into arrangements with the society for selling their goods to members at a discount varying from five to twenty-five per cent.; and besides, a large portion of the volume is occupied with advertisements, which doubtless form no inconsiderable source of profit to the Civil Service Supply Association.

## HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

### CHAPTER VIII.—FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

'Now, Denzil, let us understand one another. I shall take it very kindly, dear boy, if you will do as I ask you in this matter. After all, it is no such extraordinary service that I crave at your hands. You have ridden a horse of mine, if my memory be good for anything, before to-day.' The speaker, who, for the convenience of a more distinct articulation, had withdrawn the cigar from between his lips, leaned back in his easy-chair,

as if to mark the effect of his words upon the visitor to whom he had addressed them. He was himself a gentleman of a portly presence and rubicund face, much taller and much heavier than his former friend and brother-officer. And whereas Jasper wore a civilian's suit of speckled tweed, Captain Prodggers shewed by his gold-laced overalls and braided tunic that he was still in the army.

The famous Lancer regiment to which Jasper had once belonged having changed their quarters from Coventry to Exeter, Captain Denzil had called upon his old comrades. There had been a champagne luncheon in honour of the late commander of No. 6 Troop; and on leaving the mess-room, Jasper had gone with his former intimate Jack Prodggers, to smoke a quiet cigar in his, Jack's room.

'We're old friends, sure enough,' returned Jasper meditatively, as he watched the spiral wreaths of smoke curling upwards—'and I do not like to be disobliging; but I can but repeat that I would rather not ride. My father would be vexed if I did.'

'And you are a very good boy, as we know; quite a pattern of filial decorum!' growled out the big man in the gold-laced overalls.

'That style of argument has no weight with me, Jack,' returned Jasper, with imperturbable good-humour. 'I am no stripling, like one of your newly joined, pink-faced cornets, to be goaded by a sneer into acting contrary to my judgment. And I don't mind owning that I am on my good behaviour at Carbery just now, and would rather not, please, do anything of which Sir Sykes would disapprove.'

'It would be well worth your while,' urged his host, striking his spurred heel into the ragged carpet; 'worth any man's while who was not, like young Mash the brewer, my new subaltern, born with a gold-spoon in his mouth. There are sixty-seven horses entered for the race, and we could share the stakes between us, if we win.'

'Yes—if we win!' returned Jasper with a laugh that was almost insolent. 'I have pretty well made up my mind, though, to renounce the character of gentleman rider for some time to come.'

'And quite right too; but there may be an exception—may there not—to so strict a rule?' cheerfully replied the other captain, as he arose and busied himself in the concoction of some curious beverage, in which transparent ice and dry champagne, powdered sugar and sliced cucumber, strawberries and maraschino, were amalgamated into a harmonious whole. 'I shan't as yet take "No" for an answer, or give up the hope that you will stand by an old friend like myself in a matter which that old friend has very much at heart. With you in the saddle, I should feel victory certain.'

Confidence is strangely infectious. Jasper knew by the ring of his friend's voice that he was very much in earnest, and began for the first time to

consider that there must be some hidden reason for the cavalry officer's unprecedented pertinacity.

Captain John Prodgers was in his own line a typical officer of a class to be found in more than one fashionable regiment. Living as he had always done amongst men of rank and fortune, he had thriven somehow by dint of better brains and readier assurance than fell to the lot of his companions. No one knew whence he came. His origin seemed to date from the gazetted of his commission, and indeed he might be presumed, like a sort of regimental Minerva, to have sprung boot and armed into existence. Nobody had known him as a boy, but the grandest doors in London opened to let him in. Related to nobody of Pall-Mall repute, he was 'Jack Prodgers' to a dozen of Lord Georges and Lord Alfreds. The earthen pot swam gaily down the stream along with those of double-gilt metal, and it was certainly not the former that had suffered from any casual collisions.

'It certainly is queer,' remarked Jasper, sipping his first glass of the newly brewed compound, 'that sixty-seven horses should be entered for a quiet insignificant affair like our local steeple-chase. Pebworth, it strikes me, must blush to find itself famous. I for one am quite at a loss to account for the sudden interest which we Devonshire folks appear to have inspired in what is generally a tame rustic contest.'

Jack Prodgers, as he slowly sipped the cool contents of his huge green glass, smiled with an affable pride in the possession of superior knowledge, which was not lost upon his friend.

'You are not the only one, rely on it, Denzil, to make that remark,' he said complacently. 'Many a youngster who thinks he shews a precocious manliness by studying the sporting papers and talking of matters of which he knows as little as I do of Greek, is marvelling at the attention paid to a petty race at your father's park-gates.—Look here,' he added, handing to Jasper a newspaper carefully folded down: 'you see in that paragraph the latest intelligence. Two of the finest horses in England—The Smasher and Brother to Highflyer—are positively to appear at Pebworth. They are the favourites of course. Nobody condescends to give a thought for the present to the humble chances of my Irish mare, whose name you may notice near the bottom of the list. Now, will you ride Norah Creina?'

'She'll never gallop with Brother to Highflyer,' said Jasper decisively.

'Umph! perhaps not,' was her owner's dry answer, and there was something in the tone which made Jasper arch his languid eyebrows.

'I say Prodgers,' said Jasper, after a pause for reflection, 'what do you want me for in particular? I can ride, but so can others. Why not choose a heavy-weight jockey; or if you prefer it, some first-rate amateur like Sandiman or Lark, or Spurrier of the Hussars, men who make a living by putting their necks in jeopardy?'

'Because a professional rider would betray my confidence,' answered Prodgers frankly; 'and as for your gentlemen riders, well, well! It is a fine line, imperceptible sometimes, that separates the amateur from the hired jockey. Spurrier is as honest as the day—that I admit; but then he is one of those impracticable men who disregard hints and will not be dictated to. I don't exactly

wish to be brilliantly beaten, and to draw a big cheque by way of payment for the beating. No. My hope is in yourself.'

'I haven't seen the mare, you know,' said Jasper, hesitating.

'She is not a beauty,' replied Prodgers; 'nor will you like her better for seeing her, as you can of course before you leave. A great ugly fiddle-headed animal she is, Jasper. The man who sold her to me at Kildare, candidly admitted that there was not a single good point about her. You will not be pleased with her heavy head, awkward joints, and straggling build. No wonder that the notion of her success is scouted. Will you ride Norah Creina?'

Jasper, himself no novice, was excessively perplexed. He had a high esteem for the shrewdness of his knowing friend, and he liked Prodgers too as much as it was in his nature to like any man. While still in the regiment and in the heyday of his brief prosperity, the elder captain had been kind to him, warning him against some at least of the snares that beset careless youth, and winning but very little of his money. And here was his former Mentor actually importunate in his solicitude that Jasper should ride a hideous and undervalued quadruped, on the defects of which its proprietor expatiated with incomprehensible delight.

'The Irish mare is fast then?' said Jasper, bewildered.

Prodgers smiled mysteriously. 'Why, we've finished the cup,' he said. 'Here, Tomkins; get some more ice, and'—

'No, no; thank you,' said Jasper, rising with flushed cheeks. 'I have had enough, and it is time for me to be moving. But before I go to the railway station, I will take a peep at this phenomenon of yours, Prodgers, if you please.' The stable was visited accordingly; and Jasper, who had been prepared to see something ugly, found the reality to surpass his imagination.

'Queer-looking creature, isn't she? Lengthy as a crocodile, clumsy, and rough-coated in spite of grooming,' remarked Prodgers. 'I think I never saw a thoroughbred shew so few signs of breeding. Why, the white feet alone would disgust most judges of a horse.'

All this the owner of the Irish mare said in cheerful chuckling tones, rubbing his hands together the while, as if he spoke in jest. But Jasper Denzil, who knew enough of his friend to be aware that he was altogether incapable of an expensive joke, such as sending a worthless animal to the starting-post would be, and who was sufficiently experienced in horses to know how little can be known about them, began to entertain a profound distrust of his own judgment.

'About fit, after all, for a railway omnibus,' said Prodgers. 'Here we are at the station. Your train, eh? We've just saved it.'

'Well, I'll ride for you, Jack,' said Jasper as he took his seat.

'All right, dear boy. I'll send you a line about arrangements,' was the answer.

And so the confederates parted.

Jasper Denzil's heart was lighter as he drove briskly through the grand avenue at Carbery Chase (he had left his groom and tandem at Pebworth to await his return) than it had been of late. The stagnation of his recent life in the Devonshire



manor-house had been agreeably disturbed. He seemed for a time to have again a share in what was to him the real world of thought and action—of no very elevated thoughts or noble actions, but such as suited him—and to be again something more than heir-apparent to a baronetcy and heir-presumptive to an estate.

'I wonder now,' muttered Jasper, as he brought his equipage at an easy swinging trot up the smooth road, 'what is the peculiarity of yonder ugly animal, or why I, of all men, should be chosen out to ride her? The whole thing is a riddle. However, my father won't so much object to my wearing the silk jacket once more, to oblige an old brother-officer.'

The captain alighted in excellent spirits. On his dressing-table, however, lay two or three letters, the sight of one of which, in its pale bluish envelope, checked the current of his complacency in full tide. A glance at the handwriting confirmed Jasper's worst suspicions.

'Wilkins it is!' he said, taking it up between his finger and thumb, as a naturalist might handle a small snake the non-venomous character of which was as yet imperfectly ascertained.

Amongst the paraphernalia of Captain Denzil's dressing-table, the ivory-backed brushes, the gold-stoppered jars and scent-bottles of red Bohemian glass, was a silver hunting-flask, the top of which being unscrewed became a silver drinking-cup. Jasper filled the cup twice and tossed off the cherry-brandy almost fiercely, as a hungry dog snaps up a morsel of meat. Then he opened the letter. This was short, and was signed 'Enoch Wilkins, Solicitor.' It is not, I am told, usual for solicitors-at-law to append 'Solicitor' to their names. But Mr Wilkins, whose clients were of a slippery and shifty sort, deemed it to his advantage to remind his correspondents of his profession.

The writer 'begged to remind Captain Denzil' that certain acceptances were now overdue, and could not, to the great regret of Mr Enoch Wilkins, be again renewed. This being the case, a prompt settlement of outstanding accounts became urgent; and Mr Wilkins, aware of the inconvenience and misunderstanding to which a correspondence by letter too often gave rise, desired a personal interview with Captain Jasper Denzil, and would therefore wait on him at Carbery Chase, or meet him, if preferred, at Pebworth or Exeter, on say July 28th, a day on which Mr Enoch Wilkins could absent himself from his London office. Finally, Mr Wilkins requested a reply from Captain Denzil as to the trysting-place that would best tally with the captain's engagements.

'July 28, eh?' said Jasper thoughtfully. 'Odd, isn't it, that my legal friend should have chosen the very day of the steeplechase! Well! If Jack's confidence is but justified by the result, I may come off victorious in one encounter, however I may do in the other.'

He then caught up a pen and proceeded to indite, painfully and slowly—as is the wont of so-called men of pleasure when compelled to write—an answer to the lawyer's letter, wherein he declared his willingness to await Mr Wilkins at the *De Vere Arms* at Pebworth, at four in the afternoon of July 28.

Having sealed and addressed the envelope, Jasper tilted into the silver top of the flask what little of the cherry-brandy the latter still held,

drank it off at a draught, and proceeded to dress for dinner; quite unaware that he was the unconscious instrument in the forging of another iron link in the dread chain from Fate's own anvil.

### THE ORIGIN OF SOME SLANG PHRASES.

SLANG seems to have acquired a certain kind of vulgar popularity not only among the lower orders, but even in the higher ranks of our society. Try to banish it as we may from polite society and pretty mouths, it is a radical breed that defies proscription and seems to laugh at conventionality. If we regard grammar and style as representing the aristocracy of language, slang asserts itself as the necessary and important agent of a predominant proletariat, that refuses to be ignored. It is a power, though a vulgar power, in speech.

The word slang itself had a very low origin. It was derived from the Norman *slengge-or*, slang, or insulting words; and this when connected with the Latin word *lingua* (tongue), signified the bad language our forefathers supposed the gipsies indulged in. It then became synonymous for every word used in a thief's vocabulary; but as both gipsies and thieves are not without a great deal of mother-wit, the word slang, originally their property, was borrowed from them by their respectable neighbours, and applied to all phrases of a pithy and familiar nature, whether coarse or refined, that expressed in one or a few brief words a definite unmistakable meaning, which brought a picture before the mind, and there fixed the impression it was desired to convey. When it was found that slang phrases could be so useful, then slang rose in the world, and from being the monopoly of thieves and gipsies, it passed into other and respectable hands, who made it subservient to their wants. Its claim to popularity rests on the fact that it meets an urgent want—that of enabling people to say a great deal in a few incisive words; and so long as man is busy and 'time is fleeting,' it will doubtless hold its own as a power in speech.

Having thus briefly established the reasons for existence, it will not be uninteresting to trace a few popular slang phrases to their origin. Dr Brewer, in his interesting *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, enables us to do this. Our difficulty is to know where to begin—for a dictionary is a dictionary, and with two thousand facts to choose from, we feel rather like the ass among the bundles of hay, at a loss which to attack first; and the bundles at our command being so many and tempting, we feel no ordinary sympathy for the animal thus similarly tried. However, we open the book at random, and determine to seize the first that comes, which happens to be, *You cannot say Bo! to a goose*. How often have we relieved our feelings of irritation at the weakness of others by hurling this phrase at them! Had they only known its origin, they could have paid us back in our own coin, and made us feel very small indeed. But though we almost hesitate to arm them with a weapon which they may turn against ourselves, we must be conscientious, and do what we have undertaken. The story is this: 'When Ben Jonson the dramatist was introduced to a nobleman, the

peer was so struck with his homely appearance that he exclaimed: "What! you are Ben Jonson? Why, you look as if you could not say Bo! to a goose." "Bo!" exclaimed the witty dramatist, turning to the peer and making his bow.

From geese we pass on to cats, which are very emblematic in slang, and in the phrase *Letting the cat out of the bag* we are reminded of its thievish ancestry. 'It was formerly a trick among country folks to substitute a cat for a sucking-pig, and bring it in a bag to market. If any green-horn chose to buy a pig in a poke—that is, a blind bargain without examining the contents of the bag—all very well; but if he opened the sack "he let the cat out of the bag," and the trick was discovered.' And so the phrase passed into common use as applying to any one who let out a secret. *Who will bell the cat?* became another popular phrase, and is taken from the fable of the cunning old mouse who suggested that they should hang a bell round the cat's neck, so that due warning might be had of her approach. The idea was approved of by all the mice assembled; there was only one drawback to it: 'Who was to hang the bell round the cat's neck?' Or in shorter words: 'Who was to bell the cat?' Not one of them was found ready to run the risk of sacrificing his own life for the safety of the others, which is now the recognised meaning of the proverb. *Fighting like Kilkenny cats* is another slang simile, taken from a story that two cats once fought so ferociously in a saw-pit that they left nothing behind them but their tails—which story is an allegory, and supposed to represent two towns in Kilkenny that contended so 'stoutly about boundaries and rights to the end of the seventeenth century that they mutually impoverished each other.'

How common is the expression, *Oh! she is down in the dumps*—that is, out of spirits. This is a very ancient slang phrase, and is supposed to be derived from 'Dumpos king of Egypt, who built a pyramid and died of melancholy;' so that the thieves and the gipsies are not all to blame for having given us a few expressive words!

We next come upon a word full of pathetic meaning for many of us: it is the ghost that haunts us at Christmas-time, and pursues us more or less throughout the new year—it is the word *dun*. It is a word of consequence, for it is at once a verb and a noun, and is derived from the Saxon word *dunan*, to din or clamour. It owes its immortality—so tradition says—to having been the surname of one Joe Dun, a famous bailiff of Lincoln in the reign of Henry VII., who was so active and dexterous in collecting bad debts, that when any one became 'slow to pay,' the neighbours used to say: 'Dun him;' that is, send Dun after him.

*Draw it mild* and *Come it strong* have their origin in music, being the terms used by the leader of an orchestra when he wishes his violin-players to play loud or gently. From this they have passed into synonyms for exaggerators and boasters, who are requested either to moderate their statements or to astonish their audience.

The word *coach* in these days is a painfully familiar one, as parents know who have to employ tutors to assist their sons to swallow the regulation amount of 'cram' necessary for a competitive examination. The word is of university origin, and can boast of a logical etymology. It is a pun

upon the term 'getting on fast.' To get on fast you must take a coach; you cannot get on fast in learning without a private tutor—ergo, a private tutor is a coach. Another familiar word in university slang is 'a regular brick;' that is, a jolly good fellow; and how the simile is logically deduced is amusing enough. 'A brick is deep red, so a deep-read man is a brick. To read like a brick is to read until you are deep read. A deep-read man is, in university phrase, a "good man;" a good man is a "jolly fellow" with non-reading men; ergo, a jolly fellow is a brick.'

*I have a bone to pick with you* is a phrase that is uncomplimentary to the ladies at starting. It means, as is well known, having an unpleasant matter to settle with you; and this is the origin of the phrase. 'At the marriage banquets of the Sicilian poor, the bride's father, after the meal, used to hand the bridegroom a bone, saying: "Pick this bone; for you have taken in hand a much harder task." The gray mare is the better horse comes well after this last aspersion upon the fair sex, to shew that woman is paramount. The origin of this proverb was that a man wished to buy a horse, but his wife took a fancy to a gray mare, and so pertinaciously insisted that the gray mare was the better horse, that her husband was obliged to yield the point. But then no doubt he saw that she was right in the end, and in all probability boasted afterwards of his selection.

*To be among the gods at a theatre* is a common phrase applied to those who are seated near the ceiling, which in most theatres is generally painted blue, to represent the sky, and inhabited by rosy-faced Cupids sitting on clouds.

The proverb, *Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones*, dates back to the Union of England and Scotland, at which time London was inundated with Scotchmen. This did not please the Duke of Buckingham, who organised a movement against them, and parties formed, who went about nightly to break their windows. In retaliation, a party of Scotchmen smashed the windows of the Duke's mansion, which stood in St Martin's Fields, and had so many windows that it went by the name of the Glass House. The Duke appealed to the king, who replied: 'Steenie, Steenie, those who live in glass houses should be careful how they fling stanes.'

*First catch your hare* is the result of a mistake. It was supposed to be in a cookery-book written by a certain Mrs Glasse, and was evidently caught hold of by some wag, who read it for, 'First scatch or scadge your hare;' that is, skin and trim it—an East Anglian word; or else, 'First scotch your hare before you jug it;' that is, cut it into small pieces, as the sentence as it is now quoted is nowhere in the book. But the wag was a clever one who gave it the precautionary turn, as the phrase has done good service in warning many to secure their prize before they arrange how to dispose of it.

When people talk of having nothing but 'common-sense,' they very often mean that they have good sense only; while the real meaning of the word lies in having the sense common to all five senses, or the point where the five senses meet, supposed to be the seat of the soul, where it judges what is presented to the senses, and decides the mode of action. Another common expression is, *I was scared out of my seven senses*. The origin of

this goes very far back. According to ancient teaching, the soul of man or his 'inward holy body' was compounded of the seven properties which were under the influence of the seven planets. Fire, animated; earth gave the sense of feeling; water, speech; air, taste; mist gave sight; flowers, hearing; and the south wind, smelling. Hence the seven senses were—animation, feeling, speech, taste, sight, hearing, smelling.

It is interesting to notice how by the progress of time words become convertible; thus *baron* has for long years been held as a title of honour, while that of *slave* applies to the lowest of menials. Now the real meaning of *baron* is *dolt*, and is derived from the Latin word *baro*, a thorough fool. It was a term applied to a serving-soldier in the first instance; gradually it rose in estimation, and military chiefs were styled barons; finally, lords appropriated the title, which is now one of high distinction. On the other hand, the word *slave* is derived from a Slavonic word *slav*, meaning illustrious, noble. But when the Slavs were conquered by the Romans, they were reduced by them to become 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' *Idiot* is another word that originally had a much more respectable meaning than the one it now bears. It was used to distinguish private people from those who held office, or courted publicity in any form. Thus Jeremy Taylor says: 'Humility is a duty in great ones as well as in idiots' (or private persons). The term became corrupted at last into a synonym for incompetency, owing to the inability of idiots or private persons to take office.

A *cub* is an ill-mannered lout that needs *licking into shape*. The simile was taken from the cub of a bear, that is said to have no shape until it has been licked into form by its dam. The only difference lies in the process of licking being so much pleasanter for the animal than for the human cub, who finds nothing maternal about the cane that beats him into shape.

Before lead-pencils were common, chalk served the purpose of marking. Thus I *beat him by long chalks* refers to the ancient custom of scoring merit-marks in chalk. *Walk your chalks*, or get out of the way, is the corruption of an expression: 'Walk; you're chalked.' When lodgings were wanted in any town for the retinue of any royal personage, they were arbitrarily seized by the marshal and sergeant chamberlain; and the inhabitants were turned out and told to go, as their houses had been selected and were *chalked*. Hence the appropriateness of the peremptory dismissal: 'Walk; you're chalked.'

A 'bull' or blunder is a native of Ireland, and is derived from one Obadiah Bull, an Irish lawyer of London, in the reign of Henry VII., whose blunders were proverbial. 'The pope's bulls take their name from the capsule of the seal appended to the document. Subsequently, the seal was called the *bolla*, and then the document itself was given the name.

And now we come to a very pet word; what ladies would do without it, is hard to say, it is such a safety-valve to the feelings in moments of irritation. We have heard some gentlemen declare it was the ladies' way of swearing; but then there is nothing profane in the word *BOTHER!* It is a wholesome blessed word, however it is used, as it allows of women being irritable without being very sinful! One looks out for its etymology with

interest, and finds it is of Hibernian origin, capable of a soothing inflection, as when bother becomes botheration, which is a magnified form of bother, and suggests an ebullition of feeling that might be serious but for the relieving expletive. 'Grose,' we are told, 'suggests *both-ears* as the derivation of the word, and defends his guess by the remark, that when two persons are talking at the same time, one on one side and one on the other, the person talked to is perplexed and annoyed.' We quite believe him, and feel inclined from experience to adopt his view of the derivation.

We all know what *blarney* is—that soft sweet speech in which the sons and daughters of Erin excel; those sugared words that are so pleasant to the ear, though false to the heart. Such speech is well named *blarney*, and carries us back to the hero that made it a household word. He was one 'Cormuck Macarthy, who held the castle of Blarney in 1602, and concluded an armistice with Carew, the Lord President, on condition of surrendering the fort to the English garrison. Day after day his lordship looked for the fulfilment of the terms, but received nothing except protocols and soft speeches, till he became the laughing-stock of Elizabeth's ministers and the dupe of the lord of Blarney.' The Blarney Stone is a triangular stone lowered from the castle about twenty feet from the top, containing on it the inscription: 'Cormuck Macarthy fortis me fieri fecit, A.D. 1446.' Whoever kisses this stone is supposed to be endowed with irresistible powers of persuasion.

We began this paper by likening ourselves to the ass among the bundles of hay, not knowing where to begin; so we have nibbled a little everywhere, and have had sufficient for to-day's meal, although we are greedy enough to regret many tit-bits left untasted from sheer incapacity to consume any more at one sitting.

## FISHING FOR PEARLS.

PEARLS differ from any other kind of precious gems in requiring no aid from art to bring out their beauty. While diamonds and sapphires and rubies require to be cut and polished before they flash forth their lustrous light, pearls may be said to be ready-made wherever they are found.

Those who wear and admire them probably give little thought to the circumstances attending their production and collection; but there are few industries more interesting than that of 'fishing' for pearls, as practised in the most important pearl-producing districts. Pearls of an inferior quality to that of the true Oriental are found in a species of fresh-water mussel inhabiting Britain and other temperate countries: an important field for their production is being developed on the coasts of Queensland and Western Australia; and at the Cape of Good Hope specimens are occasionally found. But the great centres of the industry are the banks around the south and west coasts of the island of Ceylon, from which districts all the most celebrated pearls have been derived. The banks or *paars* there are under government supervision, and fishing is only allowed under the immediate inspection of the officials, who issue stringent regulations on the subject.

For some years the produce of the *paars* has been falling off, and a series of experiments has



recently been carried out, and is now in course of completion, with the object of discovering whether, instead of allowing them to be fished every year, an interval of one, two, or three years between each season will not afford a better opportunity to the bivalves to spat and develop into pearl-bearers.

The last great fishing took place during the month of March in 1877; and, as the results are said to have exceeded those of any previous season for many years past, a short account of the manner in which the operations were carried out, together with a review of the system adopted for protecting the beds from exhaustion, may be interesting.

In the first place, it will be well to remove a misapprehension which exists as to the identity of the so-called pearl-oyster. This mollusc is not an oyster properly so called, but a species of mussel, and is easily distinguished from an oyster by the squareness and length of the shells at the 'hinge.' Like the common mussel of our own shores, it attaches itself to stones and rocks by means of certain fine but strong cords or *byssus*, which it spins at will; and not, like the oyster, by a secretion of shell-matter. These cords are very tough when the animal is young, but decrease in strength as it increases in age, till at last they rot away altogether, leaving the creature at the mercy of tides and storms.

While the pearl-oyster is still young, and before it has finally attached itself to a suitable rock, it often breaks away from its anchorage; so that it not unfrequently happens that a pearl-bank well filled with oysters suddenly disappears altogether. Some authorities assert that the pearl-oyster has the faculty of casting its byssus and voluntarily migrating; but whether this is the fact or not, it is certain that the above circumstances demand the serious attention of the authorities, and have led to the adoption of a system of half-yearly inspection of the banks, in order to determine two important points, namely whether the young brood has forsaken its birthplace, or the full-grown oysters are, through old age, breaking away and being destroyed.

The duration of the life of the oyster is another necessary point to determine; and various suggestions have been made, with the double object of ascertaining the age of an oyster without the necessity of continually watching its growth, and of shewing when a bed is fit to be fished. The weight of the mollusc affords some clue to the elucidation of this problem, but there is an obstacle to the adoption of this method in the difficulty of accurately weighing a number of specimens in an open boat at sea, even if the scales and weights should be at hand. One of the government officials, however, has suggested a method of ascertaining the age of the mollusc by the weight of the shells, cleaned and dried with the animal removed. This can be done at any time; and a series of experiments conducted by him gives the following results. The shells of an oyster one year old, with the body of the animal removed, weigh four drachms; those of an oyster two years old weigh twelve drachms; three years old, nineteen drachms; and four years old, twenty-five drachms. This scale of weights will apply of course only to pearl-oysters from the Ceylon banks; as a difference in the food, in the composition of the water and soil, and the temperature in other parts of the world, would no doubt affect

the rate of growth and the deposit of the calcareous matter forming the shell. Empty shells have been found weighing as much as forty drachms, thus giving a probable age of about eight years.

The question arises, What are pearls? Are they a morbid concretion of matter produced in the endeavour to heal a wound or to cover some irritating body that cannot easily be ejected from the shells? Are they the result of a disease, or are they simply an over-production of the matter forming the shell of the creature? Whatever they are, it is only in the adult oyster that they are found of any size. The rate of growth in the size of a pearl cannot of course be actually ascertained; but by a series of averages, taken from the produce of a large number of oysters from the same bed in different years, it is proved that after the fourth year, the yield of pearls both in quantity and quality rapidly increases. It is in the hope of a bed of oysters which produces say five hundred rupees (L.50) worth of pearls per thousand oysters one year, so improving as to yield double that value next year, that many a fine bank has been left to perish from the causes referred to above, as well as from the attacks of enemies or sickness.

The whelk has lately been discovered to be a serious enemy to the pearl-oyster, just as it is to the edible oyster of commerce; and a curious disease occasionally manifests itself among the inhabitants of the banks. The fatty portion of the animal, under which pearls are usually found, and which is usually of a pale cream colour, assumes a yellow tint, denoting sickness of some sort, the exact nature of which has not yet been ascertained.

Pearl-fishing is at the best only a gigantic lottery, the prizes in which bear a very small proportion to the blanks. But in this as in many other uncertain pursuits, hope always tells a flattering tale, and keeps awake the energies of thousands of interested operators. First there are the divers, who perform the actual operations of fishing for pearls. Arrayed in Nature's garb, and provided with a knife and a small bag of netting in which to collect the gathered oysters, and with a rope tied round their waists, and a heavy stone attached to their feet, they are let down into the water, taking first a deep breath, and remaining there till forced to rise again. Expert divers will remain beneath the water for sixty, ninety, and even a hundred and eighty seconds. This period they occupy in detaching the mussels from the rocks, a matter frequently of much difficulty. Those of very small size they do not attempt to gather, for, as we have shewn, the larger the shells the more chance of their containing a pearl. The native divers are able to guess at the age of the oyster by the resistance it offers; and, as explained above, the older the oyster the more easily it is detached, and the greater the chance of its producing a large pearl.

On banks not over thickly populated, there is barely time to gather half-a-dozen oysters at a dive—a dozen is an extra good haul; in more favourable circumstances from fifty to one hundred may be collected by one man. The diver then detaches the stone from his feet, gives a tug at the rope, and is rapidly hauled up; the stone, attached to another line, being afterwards pulled up for use again. His gleanings are then placed on board the



boat; and from it he descends again on another venture. It may be imagined that life among men who so overstrain their natural functions is very precarious; for though they are brought up to the practice from their boyhood, a diver seldom lives to see old age or even maturity.

The weather is an important factor in the calculation of the pearl-fisher. 'Pearl-fishing weather' is a proverb in Ceylon, and has much the same relation to the meteorological conditions of that island as 'harvesting weather' bears to our own climate. A light steady breeze from the north-east is the most favourable for fishing the *paars* on the south and west coasts of Ceylon, as the sea is sheltered by the island, enabling the boats to sail and manoeuvre easily. Sometimes the wind will suddenly shift, and a squall will drive the boats home with no little danger to the crews; or a heavy thunder-storm, such as only the tropics can produce, will fall like a bomb-shell upon the scene of the industry; and the wonder is that the frail habitations fitted up for the accommodation of the fishers and others are not literally washed away.

Besides the actual divers, there are the working crews of the boats, the men employed in 'washing' the oysters on shore, the carrying boats, the provision-merchants, purveyors of arrack and other liquors, bazaar owners, the petty *chetties* or traders in pearls, the large merchants who buy thousands of oysters with a nod of the head, the police—and they form no small proportion of the whole population—and other government officials.

The boats are manned with a crew of one or two men, and frequently a 'counter' to take reckoning of all the oysters brought up. The boats are usually worked over the ground in circles, being ranged in line some yards apart, and each taking a small circle and advancing gradually over a certain assigned area. Sometimes they are placed close together and advance in line across the bed. But before the boats are permitted to start, the beds, having been examined by government officials, are buoyed off, and no boat is allowed to go beyond the limits thus defined. When the number of boats entered is very large—and sometimes as many as five or six hundred collect together for the prosecution of the industry—they are placed in separate divisions of eighty to a hundred each, and lots are cast for the order in which the divisions shall proceed, each division taking a day or a tide in rotation.

For the accommodation of the large numbers of people brought temporarily together by the fishery, large villages, the houses of which are composed of bamboo, wood, furze, mud, and any light material, suddenly spring up along the seashore, the population being further increased by the arrival of the buyers and merchants. From China, Japan, and all parts of the East, connoisseurs in pearls and pearl-oysters are attracted to the scene of operation, and the activity and excitement are often intense. A sample of five or six thousand oysters is examined by the government, and from the results of this sample the sales proceed. The government take three-fourths of every boat-load brought in, and special officials are appointed to dispose of these shares as soon as possible and at the best possible price. A daily auction takes place, and the lots are knocked down to the highest bidder. The method of valuing is so much per thousand oysters, the prices ranging

from forty rupees (L.4) to one hundred and twenty rupees (L.12) per thousand.

The fishermen, who sell their own share on their own account, generally receive higher prices than those fetched by the government sales; for the small traders, buying by the dozen, naturally pay more dearly than if they bought several thousands at a time; besides, the fishers can afford to wait longer till a good offer occurs. Sometimes the *chetties* will buy a dozen at a time and open them, repeating their purchases dozen after dozen, in the hope of finding a good gem, which they either sell on the spot or take away with them into the interior. The occurrence of a good pearl always sends prices up; and a man may sell an unusually fine specimen for seven or eight hundred rupees, and see it change hands for twice and three times the amount.

The collection of so many thousand natives, with very rudimentary ideas of the laws of health and cleanliness, and with facilities for drinking arrack and other ardent liquors which are as regularly to be met with on the shores of Ceylon as they are in the crowded fairs and race-courses of our own country, is often the cause of an outbreak of cholera, smallpox, or other zymotic disease. The greatest precautions are, however, taken to prevent such a catastrophe, and all cases of illness are at once isolated.

The operation of opening the pearl-oysters is also conducive to disease. To open each oyster when fresh would be a work of infinite labour; they are therefore packed together in large vessels called *ballams*, where, under the tropical heat, the animals soon die and putrefy, and the shells, gaping open, are easily washed and examined.

The greatest watchfulness has to be exercised over the natives employed in this work, where the owners do not perform the operation themselves. A pearl is very easily secreted either in the folds of the scanty dress, or in the mouth or ears, or even swallowed; and the Singhalese and indeed all the natives of the East are adepts in the art of thieving. To cheat the government out of their shares of the spoil, it is no unusual thing for the boatmen to throw large packages of oysters overboard, buoying them, so that they may be recovered under cover of darkness or on the last day of fishing, which is usually devoted to a general *sanjayan* or scramble. All boats, whether belonging to the authorised divisions or not, are then allowed to go out and keep what they can get.

These divers render essential service in discovering and reporting the existence of unrecorded rocks and shoals; and many a permanent record of their operations is left in the shape of a warning buoy, stationed to warn the navigator of a treacherous reef.

When, from the diminished daily results of the fishing, a sign is given that the bed is being exhausted, the order is given to stop fishing. The *sanjayan* over, the bed is deserted, save by the government launch appointed to remove the buoys which marked off the limits of the ground; the boats gradually make off as wind and weather permit, for their respective ports; the merchants pack up their purchases and take their departure for the great towns and cities; the government officials, having completed the records of the fishery, are gradually recalled; the temporary

huts are burnt to the ground; and the place assumes its normal state of peaceful repose, disturbed only, or rather intensified, by the presence of some wandering native bird, or by the occasional visit of a roaming elephant or jackal.

### A PERILOUS POSITION.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

HAVING committed that murderous and suicidal act, Marmaduke Hesketh crept back to the coping and seated himself directly opposite me, with the opening of the chimney between. For a long while we gazed upon each other in silence, then with an exultant laugh he burst forth: 'You look agitated, my good sir, and yet I scarcely think you have taken in the full significance of the performance you have witnessed. Your intellect, unless I do you injustice, is somewhat obtuse. I will therefore make clear our position to you. You and I are alone upon this chimney-top, and for any particular choice in the matter, we might just as well be in our tombs. Neither of us will ever again tread the earth beneath; for all connection with it being, as you perceive, cut off, it can only be reached by a leap, upon which, I fancy, we shall not be inclined voluntarily to venture. Attempts, I have no doubt, will be made to rescue us; but they will of necessity only be of such a character as can be easily frustrated—and I shall frustrate them. My own life, I assure you, is perfectly valueless to me. I have brought you here to die, and to die of a slow lingering death, aggravated by mental torture. It is a felicity I have long anticipated, and I am not likely to allow myself to be balked of it.'

'O man, man!' I cried in mortal agony, 'are you indeed a human being, or a fiend in human shape?'

'A highly melodramatic question, upon my word,' he sneered. 'Nevertheless, with my wonted good breeding, I will endeavour to answer it. I am, I believe, gentle youth, a man; and yet, to own the truth, I have been impelled to my present course of action by certain sentiments popularly attributed to the Enemy of mankind—to wit, hate, jealousy, and despair. Yes, Mr Frederick Carleton, I hate you, and I have hated you from the very first hour of our acquaintance! Your death had been determined upon by me long before this plan for securing it, with an additional piquant flavour of enjoyment to myself, had suggested itself. You have not, as I have before hinted, a very active or capacious mind; but possibly your imagination may have been sufficiently stimulated by alarm to have already suggested to you that it was I who sent, or caused to be sent, that telegram which so opportunely prevented our friend Mr Middleton from accompanying us to this elevated and delightful spot. So far as I am aware, you will be relieved to hear that Captain Middleton is in perfect health.'

'Oh, can this horrible iniquity be permitted?'

I groaned, raising my hands in frenzied suppli-

cation. 'Can this monster be actually permitted to carry out his fiendish purpose?'

'Curious, isn't it, the selfishness of the human heart?' meditated my tormentor, affecting to regard me with a studious air. 'This individual, I dare to aver, thinks that this act of mine is the very worst act ever committed. The individual in question has read, of course, of the painful deaths of thousands of his fellow-mortals by famine, pestilence, and war; of the sufferings of his own countrymen in the Black Hole of Calcutta; and of other terrible atrocities. But of all atrocities, the most atrocious and unequalled is the one that aims at depriving the world of his presence, of extinguishing the puny spark of his life, even though he has the consolation of knowing that his enemy will perish in his company! A very curious exhibition of selfishness indeed! Fie, fie, young man; I am ashamed of you!' With these words and with a sneer upon his lips, Mr Hesketh turned his face from me and fell into silence.

By this time the men who had worked the windlass, and several others engaged about the adjacent building, had gathered below, and were excitedly gesticulating and shouting. Of what they said I could not distinguish a syllable; but from their gestures, I gathered that they were inciting me to courage, and that they knew Mr Hesketh to be the cause of our calamitous situation—no doubt deeming him mad. And with the conviction that they so far comprehended the state of affairs, and would use endeavours to rescue me, hope sprang up in my breast. It was impossible, I thought, that I should be going to perish, to be cut off in this awful manner in the midst of youth and bliss. I, who loved and was beloved; who, that very afternoon, had been so full of ecstatic happiness, and had thought myself the happiest of God's creatures. No; it wasn't in the nature of things. It couldn't, couldn't, couldn't be! Repeating to myself this assurance, I watched with eager attention the further proceedings of the workmen below, and noted presently that several of them were running off in the direction of the town, whilst others were making across some fields by a footpath which led to Holm Court.

I was trying to think what means could be adopted for our salvation, when my cruel foe again addressed me. 'I hope, my friend,' he said, 'that you are not allowing yourself to be buoyed up by false hopes. The fools below (who no doubt consider me demented) think, perhaps, that they may succeed in helping you down again to *terra firma*—but you and I know better. By-the-bye, I wonder that you have not yet had the curiosity to inquire in what way you have earned my by no means impotent ill-will. Another proof, I fear, of defective phrenological development—Wonder and Acquisitiveness very small. However, you shall hear, if you will kindly favour me with your attention. I will give you in a few words the history of my life. At a very early age—don't let the fact distress you—I was left an orphan, and

was brought up by a maiden aunt, who, I fancy, was not very fond of boys. At anyrate she did not exhibit her fondness for me in such a manner as to inspire me with any return of affection, and at twenty-eight I had never known what it was to care for, or to be cared for by, any of my fellow-creatures. At that age I paid a first visit to my distant relative Mr Middleton, and saw his daughter, then about fifteen years old. With her I fell in love, as it is called; that is, I gave her the strong concentrated devotion of a wild passionate nature. I determined to marry her; but I was poor and her father was mercenary. I would not ruin my cause by speaking *then*, and in another week I was upon my way to America, bent, with iron purpose, upon making a fortune. Of my life in America I will not trouble you with an account, lest, mayhap, I might shock your virtue and sensibility. Suffice it to say, that during the seven years I remained in that country, I was by turns a gold-digger, a backwoodsman, and a merchant. During those seven years I heard regularly from Miss Middleton's maid, who received from me an annual honorarium for keeping me informed of all that concerned her mistress. At different times I had sent me by that young woman a lock of Clara's hair and a likeness, and by her I was constantly assured—false jade!—that Clara had as yet had no *affaire de cœur*. So, full of hope, I toiled on towards the accumulation of wealth, praying night and morning one simple prayer, namely, that my darling might be kept for me. And at length, with a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds, I returned to lay it and myself at the feet of her I loved—loved with a love which you, weak beardless boy, cannot even comprehend—a love which, compared with yours, is as the restless tossing ocean to a placid mill-pond, the fierce flames of a burning forest to the feeble flicker of a lucifer-match! And what did I find when, full of joyous anticipation, I arrived at her father's house? Why, I found her for whose sake I had gone through incredible labours, for whose love I had yearned night and day for seven long years, engaged, and upon the very point of marriage with an empty-headed, aristocratic stripling, six months her junior! And worst of all, I found that she absolutely loved the noodle! And now, Mr Frederick Carleton, do you wonder that I determined to frustrate your marriage? Do you wonder that I hate you with a mortal hatred? Do you wonder that I regard my own life as of no more worth than a withered autumn leaf?

'O Hesketh, I am very, very sorry for you!' I said, as he ceased to speak; for his story and the agony of his face as he related it, had touched me. 'But you are mistaken in asserting your love to be superior to mine. It is inferior—infinately inferior. For I tell you, man, that if Clara had loved you, I would not have stirred a finger to injure you; and that rather than rend her heart, as it will be rent by the knowledge of what has happened, I would willingly suffer the cruel death you have designed for me, but which I feel confident will somehow be prevented.'

'You do, do you? Well, wait and see. I imagine your confidence will soon die out. And in the meantime, keep your suavelling pity to yourself. Don't speak another word to me unless you are spoken to!'

'I will not,' I replied; my compassion vanishing, and giving place to the horror with which I had previously regarded him. And averting my face from this dreadful companion, I awaited in my perilous position the issue of events. It declared itself thus. In what must in reality have been an incredibly short period, although to me it appeared of immense duration, a large crowd had collected around the chimney, and I presently saw a kite ascending from its midst. Slowly it rose into the air, higher and higher, borne by a gentle breeze in the direction of the chimney. The object of its flight I had readily guessed; but Mr Hesketh, to my extreme astonishment, did not appear to have noticed it. He had taken a cigar from his case, lighted it with a fusee, and was now calmly smoking with his eyes in a contrary direction. At length the kite was upon a level with us, and by a dexterous movement on the part of the man who held it, it fluttered to my feet. I stretched out my hand and seized it. A thrill of pleasure passed through my frame as I felt the string tugging from beneath, and knew that, though only by a line of twine, a communication was established between me and those who were planning my rescue.

But my gratification was not of long continuance. Glancing furtively the while at Mr Hesketh, I commenced rapidly to draw in the string, to which, as I guessed, a rope would be attached, wondering if it were really possible that he had not observed what was taking place. For a moment or two he smoked on in affected ignorance or unconcern, then knocking the ashes from his cigar, and replacing it in his mouth, he approached me, deliberately opened a penknife, and with a satirically polite, 'Allow me,' held out his hand for the string. At imminent danger of a fatal slip from my seat, I struggled to prevent the accomplishment of his purpose, but in vain; and having severed the twine with a sardonic laugh he retreated to his former position. A cry of execration rose from below, so loud and wrathful and prolonged, that I thought, as directed against himself, it must surely make my foe tremble. But no; his composure, real or pretended, remained, I saw, unruffled.

And now, with what intensity of solicitude I waited for the next movement below! With what maddening impatience I watched the crowd continually augmenting, noted groups consulting together, saw people running hither and thither, gesticulating, looking upwards, shouting constantly but doing nothing! And with what unutterable misery I presently perceived on the outskirts of the crowd, a form, which by the instinct of love I could have picked out from a larger assembly and at a greater distance. Her arms stretched upwards, as though to lessen the dreadful gulf which divided us, Clara stood upon a little mound of débris; and by the agony of her attitude I could judge, though I could not distinguish her features, of the agony of her face. Mr Hesketh saw her too; for I heard him groan deeply, as though in pain, and glancing towards him, I perceived his eyes fixed in the direction where she stood. But from the



expression of his countenance, I knew well that the sight of her anguish had not shaken by one iota his pitiless resolve. Twilight fell, after a period of indefinite duration, shrouding Clara from my view; but not before I had seen her joined by a man, who had taken her in his arms and strained her to his bosom, and whom I conjectured to be Mr Middleton, returned from the fool's errand upon which he had been sent.

Upon the night of horror which succeeded I shall not dwell. All through its interminable hours, my horrid companion and I sat sleepless and silent, watching the red bonfires which blazed below, illuminating the base of the huge chimney and the figures of a considerable number of people who remained around it. By dawn the crowd had reassembled more numerous than upon the previous day, and again and again attempts were made to convey to me a rope by means of a kite, but only to be each time defeated by my powerful antagonist. Then one by one, other means of reaching us were tried; but all proved to be either infeasible in themselves or impracticable for lack of co-operation from above. By degrees every hope of rescue was extinguished in my breast, and I could only resolve to meet my fate like a man, and to pray that Clara might not suffer too keenly upon the consummation of the event. That she suffered keenly now, I could not avoid seeing, as with my despairing gaze riveted upon her, I faced the spot where with her father and mother she remained for most part of the day.

At length—it was getting towards the close of the afternoon, and unable longer to bear the sight of my beloved one's torment—I turned away, and as my eyes fell upon the crowd, I noticed within it a movement of renewed excitement. I remarked, moreover, that Mr Hesketh had also observed it, for I saw him remove his cigar (he had been smoking almost unintermittently since daybreak), and I heard him murmur: 'What are they up to now?' They were the first words he had spoken that day, and as they left his lips he started violently, for a bullet had whizzed past his ear, actually grazing it. The rifle had been discharged from behind him, and from the top of a wall belonging to the mill in process of building, and which stood quite separately and at some distance from the chimney.

'Oh, that's the game, is it?' exclaimed my reckless and now sullen enemy, speedily recovering his nonchalance of bearing. 'Well, that can easily be put a stop to. My dear fellow, I must seek protection beneath your wing. They won't shoot at me now.' And resuming his smoking, he offered me a cigar. 'Better take one,' he said sulkily, as I refused the weed with disgust. 'Smoking is a good preventive of hunger; and I daresay you are beginning to feel hungry.'

I was not hungry in the least; but I had for some hours been consumed with a terrible thirst; and as it presently occurred to me to produce an increase of saliva, by chewing a corner of my handkerchief, I felt for it in my pocket. But instead of my handkerchief, my hand lighted upon another object, cool and round, and in an instant my heart 'leaped into my throat.' I managed, however, to remain motionless, though the blood tingled through my veins with excitement, and I was obliged to keep my face turned

from him, least the inspiration of hope upon it should be visible to my intended murderer. But he had fallen again into the sullen, brooding taciturnity which he had preserved all day, and did not even glance in my direction.

Thus we sat together till the slow hours had dragged themselves away, and the second night had fallen upon us in that awful situation. Then Mr Hesketh spoke again. 'Carleton,' he said, in a tone equally determined with any he had yet used, but not so expressive of hate and satire—'Carleton, I am tired of this, and I think you have now suffered enough. Your hair, I have observed, has turned quite gray. I shall therefore put an end to your torture and my own sooner than I had intended. To-morrow morning, as soon as the gaping crowd below has re-assembled in sufficient numbers to give zest to the exhibition of our agility, we will take a leap together into their arms. Meantime, I purpose to spend this last night of my existence in sleep, and with this object shall now retire to the opposite side of our airy castle. Do not, however, delude yourself with the hope, which I fancy I detect in your quickened breathing. I am a light sleeper, having long been accustomed to sleep with one eye open, for fear of wild Indians, or worse; and at a touch, or even a movement on your part I should awake.'

If ever I prayed in my life, I surely prayed upon that awful night when I saw Marmaduke Hesketh stretched out around the parapet of the chimney, with his head resting upon one arm, doubled under it for a pillow. And surely I may believe that it was in answer to that prayer, and to the prayers for my safety of one dearer to me than myself, that the sound sleep was sent which I presently perceived to have fallen upon him. Down below flickered the red bonfires, and faint from the distance came the sound of voices; but above that sound I heard the sweet music of heavy breathing. And now, with the utmost caution, I commenced to creep round towards my enemy's head—pausing at each step to listen if he still slept. Upon the success of the plan I was about to try depended my life, and in each moment of uncertainty which intervened until I was assured of that success, I lived an eternity. At last I was quite close, and he had not awaked! I drew from my pocket the bottle of chloroform which I had bought for Mrs Middleton—*could it have been only two days ago!*—and saturating my handkerchief with it, held it before his mouth. The breathing grew quieter. I pressed the handkerchief closer, and it became inaudible. I touched him, and he did not move. I grew bolder, and shook him, yet he did not awake. And now I was assailed with a strong temptation to hurl him over the chimney's side. I could have done it, I felt, easily; and I know the act would have been justified in the eyes of most people. But I resisted the temptation—for which I shall be thankful all my life—and carried out instead my original plan of disarming him as far as possible for the present, and waiting, until absolutely compelled to it in self-preservation, before I would attempt to cause his death. My method of disarming him was to bind together as firmly and tightly as I could his arms and legs, using for this purpose the two large balls of twine which Master Charlie had so urgently impressed upon me not to forget to

purchase for him. Ah, how little I had thought when selecting them to what a use they would be employed!

Having effected my purpose, and finding my foe still motionless and unconscious, I returned to my former position, and bending downwards, shouted with all my might to attract the attention of those below. But the effort was fruitless. I could not make myself heard, neither could I, in the darkness, be descried from below. It was only when the faint streaks of coming day began to appear in the horizon that my figure could be made out standing alone and defined against the gray sky; and then I could see that a rapid search was made inside and around the chimney for the body of the man who was supposed to have fallen thence; for in his recumbent position and hidden by the low parapet, my companion could not be discerned from beneath. At length I had the happiness of perceiving that the gesticulating figure above, wildly imploring aid, was recognised as mine; and then once more I saw ascending towards me on that early summer morning a white-winged messenger of salvation. And still my dreaded enemy slept. He slept on, when I had seized the kite, and whilst I drew in with eager rapidity the string. He slept on, whilst with growing excitement I hauled up a slender rope, and then a stouter one attached thereto, dropping them both into the interior of the chimney. He slept on whilst I pulled up, hand over hand, a strong iron chain, at the end of which, when it reached me, I found affixed a horizontal iron bar. And he still slept on whilst I passed this iron bar beneath my legs as a seat, and feeling the chain held firmly from below, grasped it with both hands and let myself over the side. Then, whether or not he slept I thought no more, as with closed eyes and heart full of thanksgiving, I felt myself gradually lowered against the chimney's smooth side, down, down, down, until in the end I touched the firm earth, saw a sea of faces gathering around me, heard a hubbub of congratulation, and sank into unconsciousness.

When I recovered from an illness which super-vened, and which lasted several weeks, I found myself in the chamber I usually occupied when visiting at Holm Court, with Clara by my side, pale and worn with anxiety and watching. My nerves had been so unstrung by the mental shock I had endured, that for a long time no allusion was permitted in my presence to the events I have recorded. But eventually, on my insisting on being informed of Mr Hesketh's fate, I was told, that after waiting several hours for any movement on the part of the supposed madman, a brave bricklayer had volunteered to ascend the chimney by the same means as I had used in its descent, and had found him stone-dead, with his limbs bound, and in the position I had left him. By the administration of the chloroform I had unintentionally slain him.

Two words in conclusion. The unfortunate man was brought to the ground in the car in which, two days before, he had ascended with me intent upon his murderous purpose—a couple of mechanics having ascended by means of the chain and bar and readjusted the machinery. He was buried. And six months afterwards I was married—not as the gay, sprightly youth I had been before that awful adventure, but as a gray-headed,

prematurely aged man. But Clara loves me in spite of my white hairs, and Time with his healing hand is gradually effacing the mental scar, and restoring to me my youthful health and spirits.

### COFFEYVILLE.

IN the Western States of America, wherever the iron trail extends its path beyond the borders of civilisation, in quest of new fields for colonisation and commerce, it is accompanied in its track during construction by a shifting population of camp-followers—mostly the scum of society—who in their temporary resting-places often unwittingly sow the seeds of future thriving towns and cities. This result, however, is the exception rather than the rule, and only happens in cases where the natural advantages of the site selected are such as to induce far-seeing men of the right sort to remain and turn them to account. In most instances the existence of these wooden hamlets, or 'cities' as they are invariably called in the West, is but that of a butterfly, here to-day and gone to-morrow, lasting just as long as they serve to form depots for the labourers and employes while at work on that particular section of the road, and then passing on with them to the next resting-place. These railway creations are commonly called 'mushroom cities.'

The little town of Coffeyville in the southern part of Kansas, at the birth of which I chanced to be present, when it sprang up as if by magic from the surrounding prairie, may be taken as a fair example of the *modus operandi* of 'locating' a new 'city' on the western frontier. This place is somewhat unlike the general run of mushroom cities, because, without any peculiar advantages of situation, it has survived, almost in spite of itself, up to the present day, in consequence of its being for a long time the terminus of the Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Galveston Railroad, before legislation permitted that line to pass through the Indian territory. Though unlike in this respect, its birth and early life were similar in every particular. In all, the same extravagant excitement and speculation in corner lots temporarily prevail; the same scenes of lawlessness and bloodshed are enacted, and the usual number of lives sacrificed by knife or bullet in drunken brawls and gambling disputes. Usually the career of these temporary cities is nipped in the bud as soon as the railway has advanced far enough to require a fresh depot. Then if the present site does not possess sufficient qualifications for the town's growth to induce any one to remain, the wooden buildings are taken down, packed on the construction train, and transported to the next resting-place, for a repetition of the old scenes of feverish excitement and dissipation. After their removal, nothing remains to mark the late scene of busy life and revelry except two or three worthless old shanties, broken bottles and rubbish of every description, and torn and discoloured playing-cards and scraps of paper, which are whisked up and whirled far and wide in the eddies of the prairie

breezes. But I was nearly forgetting to mention the most important souvenirs invariably left behind by these advancing heralds of civilisation. These are the mounds which mark the final resting-places of those who 'died with their boots on' (as expressed on the frontier); who met men quicker than themselves at their own weapons—the revolver and the bowie-knife—and who were carelessly thrown into their lonely graves, there to remain as silent witnesses of lawless savagery.

Sometimes the embryo city, either from the natural advantages of its position, or from other causes (as in the case of Coffeyville), outlasts the ordinary life of the mushroom genus, and develops into a quiet-going market-town, which in time assumes such proportions and attracts such population as its trade with the surrounding settlers will support. Wood and water, as well as the course of the railroad, are the prime considerations which determine the site of a new township. As soon as that is settled upon, the silence and solitude of the lonely prairie are rudely invaded by a motley throng of saloon-keepers, speculators, gamblers, traders, and others, who make it their first business to establish their claim to a town-lot. This they do by planting a stake in whatever plot of ground they may select, and inscribing their name and date of entry upon it; this notice of occupation being respected quite as much as if the owner were standing guard over his property with a drawn revolver. In a short time the materials for building their temporary structures are brought along on the construction train or in wagons, and work begins in such earnest that it is a common occurrence to see them all erected and fronting the grass-covered main street of the place in less than twenty-four hours. In these buildings are sold such articles of merchandise as are most needed at this early stage of the city's existence, prominent amongst them being whisky, of the most villainous quality, commonly called 'forty rod whisky,' on account of its being supposed to render a man senseless before he can accomplish that distance after drinking it.

Now let me endeavour to describe some of the features peculiar to the budding life and progress of these pioneer settlements. First of all, there is the hastily improvised hotel, constructed partly of wood and partly of canvas. Here bed and board, such as they are, can be obtained for three or four dollars a day. The arrangements of the hotel are remarkable for their simplicity, and its accommodations unique in their discomfort. It is neither wind nor water tight, and one can only pray the elements to be propitious. Trestle-beds are packed as closely as possible in the sleeping-room, and when the supply of these is exhausted, the floor has to do duty for them. You cannot now any longer hope for the comfort of a bed to yourself, nor indeed at any place on the frontier. The most disagreeable effect of this want of separate accommodation is the unpleasant feeling of anxiety occasioned as to what kind of a man your partner for the night may be; whether he will come to bed tipsy or sober, and whether the revolver which he puts under his pillow is at full or half cock.

On rising in the morning you look for a place to

perform your ablutions, and find that the lavatory is nothing more than a deal plank in rear of the dining-room, in the open air. It is furnished with a tin basin, securely fastened by a chain to a staple in the side of the building, a very dirty looking towel on a roller, and a small piece of yellow soap, which seems likely to do duty during the rise and fall of many a future mushroom city, for by no amount of ingenuity can any suds be possibly coaxed out of it. There is also a looking-glass, or rather a piece of one, which it makes you nervous to look in; and a veteran comb 'minus several teeth, which nevertheless is considered one of the most valuable articles in the place, and to avoid appropriation, is also fastened to the side of the house by a chain. Having availed yourself of these luxurious surroundings, you go to breakfast, and find the ubiquitous hot biscuits, tough thin beef-steaks, and poor coffee awaiting you. Several outsiders, besides those who are staying at the house, drop in for this meal, each one putting his pistol on the table at the side of his plate; and breakfast is rapidly despatched under a sort of armed neutrality, which makes a timid man, new to the thing, fearful of breaking it by even asking his next-door neighbour to pass the salt.

Outside, on chairs tilted back against the side of the house, are two or three frontier doctors, their ears on the alert to catch the sounds of strife, which may possibly betoken the need of their healing art. One or two lawyers and real-estate men are also there, with plans of the city already mapped out, eager to buy or sell, though at very different prices. Besides these, there are numerous individuals of the nondescript class known as 'bummers,' whose business at this or any other place is a mystery, but who seem to rub along somehow or other, and at this minute are retailing the latest bar-room 'shooting scrape,' and discussing the city's chances as if they had great interests at stake.

All this time the hubbub and excitement in the main street are ever increasing. If you walk down it, you will find one or two drug stores, an ironmongery establishment, a store where anything can be obtained from a sombrero to a set of harness, and a butcher's shop. With these exceptions, every building is a bar-room or gambling-house. In these, the games of faro, keno, roulette, and poker are in full swing day and night, the dealers at the first-named game being relieved when tired, or when the cards seem to be persistently running against them. The professional gamblers who frequent these scenes can be easily recognised. They are generally the best-dressed men in the place, by which I mean that they wear black cloth clothes and a diamond solitaire in their shirt front, which places them in bold relief against the surrounding roughly clad assemblage. These professional gamblers are usually styled 'sporting men' or 'sports.' They have an expression in their faces peculiar to the fraternity—a watchful, calculating, cruel look, and an impassive countenance carefully trained not to betray any signs of their feelings. When off duty, if we may so express it, some of them are gentlemanly, pleasant enough companions, who might really be trusted; but on duty they become again the unscrupulous gambler, ready to fleece his friend, by fair play or foul, without a particle of compunction. They are ever on the *qui vive* with their weapons, although not

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quarrelsome; nor do they drink much, are coolly brave and determined as well as excellent shots, and have not much belief in anything here or, we fear, hereafter.

In the distance are the gangs of labourers, mostly Irish, hard at work on the railroad, who are herded together at night in a movable frame boarding-house, where they are also fed by a contractor with the railway company. Here and there are travelling carpenters busily employed in hammering together a few pieces of timber, to be placed on lots already claimed, but which are required to present some evidence of the owner's intention to build, so as to preserve his title, and prevent the claim from being 'jumped.' These rough-and-ready mechanics are in great request, and make plenty of money while the early excitement is prevailing; but few of them are able to withstand the attractions of the gambling resorts, where in the long-run they are sure to deposit all their earnings. The ubiquitous quack doctor is also here with his painted chariot and fantastically attired attendant, and is the centre of an admiring crowd, to whom he sings (or rather shouts) in comic rhyme the praises of his 'Universal Heal All' or 'Magic Ague Cure.' Beware of the rascal, for likely enough one of his pockets is full of counterfeit change, which he will palm off on the unwary and innocent-looking customer. Lounging about at the various bar-room doors are numerous specimens of the western border-men—hunters and scouts—tall, angular, bony-looking fellows, with bronzed complexions, hair trailing over their shoulders, and a brace of revolvers strapped round their waists. They will probably hang about the new town until they have gambled their money away, when they will return to their home, the open prairie, where no finer or more trustworthy fellows can be found.

See yonder primitive ferry-boat crossing the narrow but deep little river Verdigris. Its owner you may be sure will reap a rich harvest from his venture, as it is the only practicable crossing-point on the road which leads to Coffeyville from the more settled districts. This ferry is one of the fast disappearing remnants of the rude old frontier contrivances for crossing a creek. It is a kind of flat-bottomed boat, capable of transporting one wagon at a time, and is hauled to and fro by a rope fastened round the trunk of a tree on each bank of the river. Over this ferry, passengers and vehicles are continually crossing, and as they arrive at their destination, fresh wooden buildings are run up with inconceivable rapidity. And when the mushroom city's future is assured by undoubted local advantages the work of building correspondingly increases with the most exaggerated ideas of the future town's importance, until a natural reaction sets in to restore the general equilibrium. Upon my departure from Coffeyville, just two weeks after the first building was erected, it boasted some two hundred houses, a three-story hotel completed to its second story, a railroad station, and stores filled with merchandise, farming implements, and provisions of all kinds.

In the wonderful growth of these mushroom cities, as in all other matters of business and speculation, are the pushing and go-ahead traits of the American character (the infection of which appears to be soon caught by naturalised foreigners) most strikingly exemplified. Thus are towns

and villages daily bursting into life in the track of every newly constructed railway, and gradually driving the wild Indian and the buffalo farther and farther towards the setting sun and extinction.

### THE BEAVERS OF BUTE.

VARIOUS newspapers have lately informed us that the Marquis of Bute, with tasteful munificence, has made a gallant and successful attempt to acclimatise beavers on his estate in the island of Bute, a few miles from Rothesay. None but a nobleman with extensive grounds comprehending a wood with an adjacent stream and other accessories, could enter hopefully on an adventure of this kind; nor can we omit the consideration of means for guarding the animals against the acquisitive intrusion of poachers, to say nothing of hosts of holiday visitors, who are not usually very particular in satisfying their curiosity. So far, as we understand, there has been little to complain of. The beavers introduced have been allowed to conduct their engineering operations unmolested, and to increase in numbers. The best account we have seen of this somewhat remarkable undertaking is that given in a late number of the *Daily Telegraph*, which we condense as follows for the amusement of our readers.

'In a solitary pine-wood, a space of ground has been so carefully walled in by a ring-fence that beavers cannot possibly escape from it. Through the little park thus formed runs a small mountain stream, and the domain inclosed ought to constitute, when its natural advantages are taken into account, a beaver's paradise. Left to themselves, the beavers have entirely altered the appearance of the stream. They have built across it no fewer than three dams. The lowest of these is the largest and most firmly constructed, as if the little engineers had been aware that it would have to support the strongest pressure of water. To make it, large boughs and whole trunks of trees have been cut down, thrown across the stream, wattled with mud, and otherwise secured. The dam thus erected preserves the water above it at a regular height; and in the pool which they have fashioned in this ingenious method the beavers have built their hut. The structure, which is composed of boughs, driftwood, mud, and stones, resembles nothing so much as a large thrush's nest turned upside down; while inside it is excavated with runs, holes, and quarries made for themselves by Lord Bute's little tenants for the purposes of safety and concealment. With their sharp chisel-like teeth, the small animals have cut down not a few of the trees in what we may call their beavery. Their mode of procedure is simple. They first gnaw a wedge-shaped gap into one side of the tree, and they then attack the other side and gnaw the remaining half, by which alone the trunk is held upright. Their intelligence is such that the tree usually falls in the exact direction in which they wish it to go, and that is generally across the current. Should it, however, prove too heavy, or should it fall too far from the water, they will saw it into pieces with their teeth and roll it for

themselves to its proper destination. Left to their own devices, the beavers have bred and multiplied. Originally they consisted of but two pairs, which had for some time dwelt in the Zoological Gardens. They have, however, added to their numbers, and according to the latest reports, there are supposed to be something like a hundred of them.

'The beaver is one of the few animals still remaining from which man can learn a lesson of engineering. Of all natural artificers, the beaver is confessedly the most ingenious. It is a large species of water-rat, about the size of a tame rabbit; and its enemies, such as the fox, the wolverine, and the various other small carnivorous inhabitants of the river's bank, must always have pressed it sorely. Necessity is the mother of invention, and in the great natural struggle for existence, the faculties of the beaver became sharpened. It gave up burrowing in the bank, like its little congener the water-rat, and took to dwelling upon islands. When a natural island was not ready to hand, it would construct itself an artificial one; and such beavers as took to artificial islands must, like those early specimens of the human race who dwelt in houses founded upon piles driven into the lake's bed, have soon discovered the necessity of preserving round about them a permanent water-level. This is of course the one object of the beaver's dam. Around the little fortress which the beaver makes for himself in the middle of a stream, the water is kept at a uniform and regular height by the action of the artificial barrier below. The entrance to the house is beneath the surface, and from the bank the wolverine and the fox watch with disgust their desired prey swimming comfortably round about his habitation. In winter, when the river is frozen over, the beaver's house is no doubt open to the attacks of his enemies; but it is then itself frozen into a solid mass of masonry, as hard as the strongest Portland cement, and the little rodent inside is in a position securely to defy even the strong claws of the wolverine. Lord Bute's beavers have built themselves, as yet, but one of these river fortresses. In a full-sized North American beaver colony, however, there will be a dozen, a couple of dozen, and sometimes even a hundred or more beaver nests projecting from the surface of the stream, while the dam will be as large and strong as an English mill-weir. Should Lord Bute's beavers multiply, they will require more ground, and there is really no reason why they should not be re-acclimatised on the island of Bute. The experiment would be interesting, although, since the introduction of silk hats, the skin of the beaver has long ceased to have much commercial value.' Still, the fur of the beaver may be made available as a trimming for ladies' winter dresses and otherwise.

'Originally the beaver was a British animal, and the isle of Bute was as much its native home as the banks of the Mackenzie. It is still to be found here and there along the unfrequented tributaries of the Rhone, the Danube, and the Weser. The beaver [if unmolested] would thrive admirably on our Scotch rivers. The kangaroo would make a magnificent addition to our larger parks and open waste lands. Indeed the Duke of Marlborough has at Blenheim a herd of kangaroos which have flourished for some years past as vigorously, and prospered as remarkably, as the beavers on the

isle of Bute. There are not many animals, it is true, which could be with advantage introduced, or for which space could be afforded. But this fact is in itself an additional reason for persevering in every attempt at all likely to end in anything short of absolute failure. In the case of the beaver, the chief objection to him is that he destroys valuable trees by cutting them down for his engineering purposes. This is no doubt the case; but, on the other hand, a beaver, if driven to extremities, will construct both his dam and his dwelling of mud, stones, and stray débris.' The writer of the article adds: 'It is a question whether beaver-farming might not be carried on at a profit in the wilds of Scotland, as ostrich-farming is at the Cape. From this particular point of view, indeed, Lord Bute's experiment is more interesting than attempts at acclimatisation can usually claim to be considered.'

We trust that nothing will occur to mar the undertaking, or to discourage others who have the means from cultivating the beaver in suitable situations throughout the United Kingdom. In the meanwhile, the Marquis of Bute deserves thanks for his enterprise.

#### LINES WRITTEN AFTER PERUSING A LETTER WRITTEN BY ROBERT BURNS.

Only a scrap of paper, old and worn,  
He wrote one day, when in a mood forlorn;  
Few are the words, and simply do they stand,  
Yet thrill us—they were written by his hand.

His hand had penned these words on which we gaze;  
The hand that gave the 'Daisy' sweetest praise;  
That held a sting for falsehood, and for pride,  
And dared raise *manhood* o'er all else beside.

His eyes looked down upon that faded page—  
The eyes that had the vision of the sage;  
The eyes that did with wit and laughter glow,  
Yet had a tear of sympathy with woe.

His heart impelled these kind words to a friend—  
That full, true heart fast throbbing to its end.  
In life neglected, what avails it now,  
That men would wreath the laurel round his brow?

Ah, little dreamed he, as he wrote these lines,  
That hearts would beat, to look upon the signs  
So careless traced one day, in mood forlorn,  
But treasured now, as by the poet born.

H. K. W.

The Conductors of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL beg to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:

1st. All communications should be addressed to the

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2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove ineligible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full *Christian* name, surname, and address, legibly written.

4th. MS. should be written on one side of the leaf only.

5th. Poetical offerings should be accompanied by an envelope, stamped and directed.

Unless Contributors comply with the above rules, the Editor cannot undertake to return ineligible papers.

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